

Amendment to the Claims:

The following listing of claims replaces all previous versions and listings of claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for providing continuous communication between passive equipment and active equipment, comprising:

monitoring signals received from at least one of said passive equipment and active equipment, said signals relating to at least one equipment state; and

upon detecting a state change:

converting a signal associated with said state change to a TCP/IP-formatted request; and

transmitting said request to a host system;

receiving said request from said host system;

removing TCP/IP formatting from said request resulting in a file transfer protocol message;

converting said file transfer protocol message to a signal; and

responding to said signal by at least one of said passive equipment and said active equipment;

wherein said converting a signal associated with said state change includes:

decoding said file transfer protocol message; and

setting a signal line to a requested state.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said signals include directions for executing a carrier handshake operation between said passive equipment and said active equipment.

4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 3, wherein said signals conform to SEMI E84 specification.

5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said transmitting said request to a host system further includes transmitting said request to a materials control application executing on said host system, said materials control application associated with said active equipment.

6. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said state change is indicated via pin assignments located on a connector that is coupled to said at least one of a passive equipment and an active equipment.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said monitoring signals includes monitoring signals for at least one load port associated with said at least one of a passive equipment and an active equipment.

9. (Currently amended) A system for providing continuous communication between passive equipment and active equipment, comprising;

a conversion unit coupled to at least one of said passive equipment and active equipment, said conversion unit operable for:

monitoring signals received from at least one of said passive equipment and active equipment, said signals relating to at least one equipment state; and

upon detecting a state change, converting a signal associated with said state change to a TCP/IP-formatted request; and

a message handler coupled to said conversion unit, said message handler operable

for:

receiving said request from said conversion unit; and

transmitting said request to a host system;

wherein said message handler is further operable for removing TCP/IP formatting from said request resulting in a file transfer protocol message; and

wherein said conversion unit is further operable for:

converting said file transfer protocol message to a signal;

responding to said signal by at least one of said passive equipment and said active equipment; and

wherein said converting a signal associated with said state change includes:

decoding said file transfer protocol message; and

setting a signal line to a requested state.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously presented) The system of claim 9, further comprising a connector coupled to said at least one of a passive equipment and an active equipment, said connector in communication with said conversion unit; wherein said connector includes pins assignable for specifying a state change.

13. (Previously presented) The system of claim 9, wherein said signals include directions for executing a carrier handshake operation.

14. (Previously presented) The system of claim 13, wherein said signals conform to

SEMI E84 specification.

15. (Previously presented) The system of claim 9, further comprising a materials control application executing on said host system; wherein said transmitting a request to a host system includes transmitting said request to said materials control application, said materials control application associated with said active equipment.

16. (Previously presented) The system of claim 9, wherein said TCP/IP-formatted request includes an Internet Protocol header operable for specifying an address of at least one load port associated with said at least one of a passive equipment and an active equipment.

17. (Previously presented) The system of claim 9, further comprising a network; wherein said host system receives said request from said message handler via said network.

18. (Previously presented) The system of claim 17 wherein said network is a local area network.

19. (Previously presented) The system of claim 17, wherein said network is a wireless local area network.

20. (Currently amended) A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for providing continuous communication between passive equipment and active equipment, said program code including instructions for causing a conversion system to implement a method, comprising:

monitoring signals received from at least one of said passive equipment and active equipment, said signals relating to at least one equipment state; and

upon detecting a state change:

converting a signal associated with said state change to a TCP/IP-formatted request; and

transmitting said request to a host system;

receiving said request from said host system;

removing TCP/IP formatting from said request resulting in a file transfer protocol message;

converting said file transfer protocol message to a signal; and

responding to said signal by at least one of said passive equipment and said active equipment;

wherein said converting a signal associated with said state change includes:

decoding said file transfer protocol message; and

setting a signal line to a requested state.